

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Examiner is thanked for indicating that claims 6 and 9 contain allowable subject matter. The Final Office Action dated December 24, 2008 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Applicants have made minor amends to the title. Also, claims 1 and 8-12 are hereby amended. Claims 19-31 are newly added. Claims 2-7 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. No matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1 and 8-31 are currently pending, of which claims 13-17 are withdrawn from consideration. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-5, 8, and 10-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,284,543 to Kusano et al. ("*Kusano*") in view Langmuir, 2002, 18, 2785-2788 to Lou et al. ("*Lou*").

Not necessarily agreeing with the Office Action and for the sole purpose of expediting prosecution, Applicants amended claim 1 to incorporate limitations of allowable claim 6 and intervening claims 2 and 3. As such, amended claim 1 and its dependent claims 8-12 and newly added dependent claims 30-31 are allowable combined teachings of *Kusano* and *Lou*. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

The Office Action rejects claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over *Kusano* and *Lou* in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,547,270 to Naarmann ("*Naarmann*"). Claim 7 is canceled, so the rejection of claim 7 is moot. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

The Office Action rejects claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over *Kusano* and *Lou* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,335,571 to Capote et al. ("*Capote*").

Claim 12 depends from claim 1. As discussed, amended claim 1 is allowable. Therefore, claim 12 is also allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

The Office Action rejects claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over *Kusano* and *Lou* in view of Case law.

Claim 18 depends from claim 1. As discussed, amended claim 1 is allowable. Therefore, claim 18 is also allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Applicants rewrite claim 9 in independent form as new claim 19 to include all the limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claim 8. Accordingly, new independent claim 19 is allowable. New claims 20-29, which variously depend from claim 19, are also allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 19.

The application is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action is respectfully solicited. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911.

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Respectfully submitted,

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